

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 through 16 are pending in the application.

Applicants acknowledge with gratitude the Examiner's indication that Claims 1 through 16 are patentable in light of the art of record.

Claim 1 has been amended to positively recite that the inventive food shirred casings have pleats. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application as filed, for example on Page 1, lines 13 through 19.

Claim 1 has also been amended to reflect that the inventive food casings are further based on a blend of at least one polyamide and/or (co)polyamide and at least one hydrophilic component. Support for this amendment can be found in the Application as filed, for example on Page 5, lines 17 through 19.

Reexamination and reconsideration of this application, withdrawal of all rejections, and formal notification of the allowability of the pending claims are earnestly solicited in light of the remarks which follow.

**Section 112 Rejection**

Claim 1 through 16 stand rejected over the recitation "pleats." Applicants respectfully submit that the recited "shirred" food casings by definition have pleats. Without further addressing the merits of the rejection and solely to advance prosecution of the case, the claims have been amended to positively recite the presence of pleats. As noted above, support for this amendment can be found in the Application as filed, for example on Page 1, lines 13 through 19, generally discussing the manufacture of "shirred" casings. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the foregoing rejection.

**CONCLUSION**

It is respectfully submitted that Applicants have made a significant and important contribution to the art, which is neither disclosed nor suggested in the art. It is believed that all of pending Claims 1 through 16 are now in condition for immediate allowance. It is requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned if any questions remain to expedite examination of this application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those which may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time and/or fees are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2193.

Respectfully submitted,

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